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## Victory Through Organization: Why the War for Talent is Failing Your Company and What You Can Do About It by Dave Ulrich, David Kryscynski, Mike Ulrich, Wayne Brockbank

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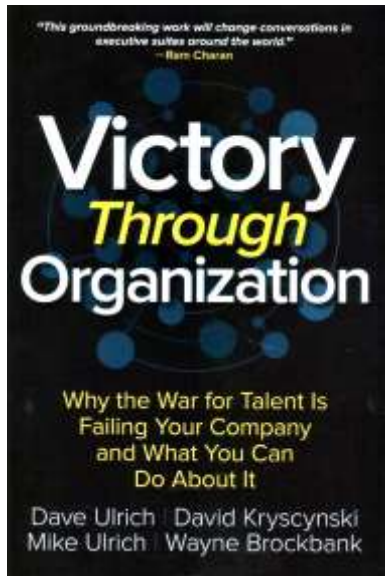
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## Victory Through Organization: Why the War for Talent is Failing Your Company and What You Can Do About It

— Reviewers **M. Ganesh Sai** and **M. Ramakrishna Sayee**

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Authors Dave Ulrich, David Kruscynski, Wayne Brockbank and Mike Ulrich's book released in 2017 — *Victory Through Organization: Why the War for Talent is Failing Your Company and What You Can Do About It* — offers tools business leaders and HR professionals need to better and more comprehensively respond to emerging opportunities as well as provide expert advice for building HR departments to deliver measurable business value. It helps build organization capabilities, strengthen systems, and empower human capital — for sustainable success. This text both offers the reader a vast supply of updated ideas and insights on HR and underscores the importance of talent management and leadership development.

### What is Inside?

In *Victory*, HR professionals and business leaders will learn how they can ensure that their respective organizations create greater value than the sum of individual talent parts; how to create more integrated HR solutions for business results across multiple stakeholders; how HR departments can better create a comprehensive information advantage; and how HR professions can master the competencies that have greatest impact on their personal effectiveness, key inside and outside stakeholders, and business results. It shares six assumptions about the state of HR today — HR matters; HR research is imperative; HR professionals are changing; HR departments and practices are becoming more important; HR colleagues are incredibly gifted; and HR is a dynamic and innovative discipline.

This book unveils that HR is not about HR. HR begins and ends with the business. Every business is a product of its context. Business success comes when the internal strategy anticipates or responds to external conditions. The evidence of why HR matters for business outcomes comes from many diverse sources. Over time and through our research, authors have found the following:

- Only 61 of the original Fortune 500 firms still exist as independent firms.
- Successful chief executive officers (CEOs) have the same skills set as successful chief human resource officers (CHROs), in comparison to chief marketing officers (CMOs), chief information officers (CIOs), or even chief financial officers (CFOs).

- Approximately 30 to 40 percent of board of director time is spent on organization and people issues.
- Investors are increasingly aware of leadership capital as part of their investment decision making.

Authors unfold that people with a growth mindset believe that they can improve with effort. They outperform those with a fixed mindset because they embrace challenges — treating them as opportunities to learn something new. There are countless successful people who would have never made it if they had succumbed to feelings of helplessness: Walt Disney was fired from the *Kansas City Star* because he “lacked imagination and had no good ideas;” Oprah Winfrey was fired from her job as a TV anchor in Baltimore for being “too emotionally invested in her stories;” Henry Ford had two failed car companies prior to succeeding with Ford; and Steven Spielberg was rejected by USC’s Cinematic Arts School multiple times. Imagine what would have happened if any of these people had a fixed mindset. They would have succumbed to the rejection and given up hope. People with a growth mindset don’t feel helpless; they know that in order to succeed, they need to be willing to fail hard, acquire enduring resilience, and ultimately bounce right back.

This book explains that David Staffanson who is the VP of HR for Varian Medical System carried a notebook and would write down the things that were important to the employees and ask them what he could do to help. He was notorious for this personal checklist. The most important part of it was that he would reliably follow up on the information transcribed. He always completed what he committed to do, and this established credibility with the employees — from the production workers to the business leaders.

## HR Takeaways

- Four factors characterize today’s information flow within and between organizations: speed, pervasiveness, ubiquity, and structure.
- Amazon started in books and now sells almost everything. Google has expanded from its search engine roots into biotech research, venture capital investments, and longevity research. Examples of five business model disruptions include the following: distribution channel control; cost-based efficiency; innovation; globalization and service quality.
- Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL, Unilever’s Indian operation) hires some of the best young talent out of the best Indian universities. To ensure their intellectual and emotional connection with the masses of India, HUL has its trainees travel to remote villages and live with the poor of India for several weeks to several months. They then bring this understanding with them as they serve customers and as they rise in HUL’s leadership ranks.
- The following four steps can be followed to create and deliver a clean set of integrated HR practices: differentiate between corporate and business strategy; identify the culture that is required for one’s firm to win its customers’ hearts and wallets; clarify the required technical competencies; and design and implement HR practices and policies.
- Companies are experimenting with different avenues through which to connect customers to employees. Such avenues include locating employees in the customers’ facilities (GE), having customers visit the company’s site to speak to employees

(Timken), arranging for employees to spend time with customers as they use one's products (P&G), engaging employees in market research efforts (Disney), having customers participate in employee training courses (GE), having employees listen to customer service phone calls (Unilever), and having employees summarize company references on social media (McDonald's). Our experience is that very few HR development specialists apply this logic in framing their development efforts. Companies that concurrently utilize these multiple loops will find their learning cycles will quickly move employees toward greater performance.

- In order to better manage and leverage the importance of organization, it is useful to understand the fundamental drivers that bring organizations into existence and to define the value they create.
- Credible activists are respected and proactive. Credible individuals who are not activists may be respected for their insights or expertise, but have little impact. Activists who are not credible may have good ideas, but no one pays much attention to them. Credible activists become the foundation for getting invited to the proverbial table (or to engage in business dialogue). Effective HR professionals become credible activists as they achieve trust and respect within the organization by exhibiting integrity, strong interpersonal skills, and business acumen.
- Learning requires a commitment to improve. A successful self-improvement plan has five elements. They are recognition of the need for change; a specific goal, time and plan of action for changing; support before, during, and after taking action; rigorous monitoring of progress; help from a spotter or admired individual who reinforces and supports change motivation and commitment.
- If you feel like your communication skills are lacking, here are a few ideas for improvement: seek out opportunities to present at a conference or offer in-house training; publish an article about a business issue in a journal, magazine, or blog; join your local Toastmasters or other social setting; have written material critiqued by a writing professional; observe great speakers or writers, and take notes *less* on what they say and more on *how* they say it; and practice drawing visual images of complex problems that clarify key issues.
- It is no longer enough for HR to merely implement strategy created by others; HR must help co-create it by understanding emerging market opportunities.
- Business success comes when HR professionals can effectively envision external opportunities, help translate these opportunities into business strategy, and then create the right talent, leadership, and culture to respond.
- American Express finds business opportunities in data processing, a core competence derived from its credit card business; General Electric is moving into the Internet of Things, an extension of its technological skill base; and IBM acquires PWC to develop its service and advisory business. How a firm wins is often tied to the disciplines of execution centered around talent (right people, right skills, right place, right time, and right motivation), leadership at all levels of the organization, and organization capabilities of information, innovation, service, collaboration, and efficiency. HR professionals bring value to these strategy questions. As such they help shape the content of strategy.
- The world is changing so quickly that what was considered "right" yesterday is not right today and will not be right tomorrow.

- The ability to effectively navigate the paradoxes that exist in the modern work environment has become essential for effective HR managers. To do so, they need to be flexible enough to move from convergence (focusing on priorities, making a decision, and reaching consensus) to divergence (exploring alternative perspectives encouraging diversity) and back again. They must be able to disagree without being disagreeable and allow tension without contention.
- Surround yourself with great people, both inside and outside of work. Networks may be for social support to form relationships, knowledge to gain insight, trust to share personal feelings, and purpose to share values.

### What is the Recommendation?

This book deals with human resources, talent management, and leadership development. It is written in a conversational tone. Each word in this book is a pearl. The ideas and insights on HR are well-punched. It is a widely-researched book imbued with both case studies of global companies that adopted the best HR practices and with examples and illustrations of successful HR leaders. It is a practical book packed with action. The authors wrote this book based on years of their practical experiences and their association with eminent HR leaders the world. This book is an encyclopedia on HR; it serves as a library for HR leaders globally and is punctuated with updated research findings that inevitably prompt further research on HR.

This book is useful for HR professionals and business leaders including CEOs. You can gift this book to your friends and they will thank you forever for your kind gesture. We strongly recommended reading this book!

#### Reference:

<https://www.amazon.com/Victory-Through-Organization-Failing-Business/dp/1259837645>

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### About the Reviewers

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*Address for shipping a complimentary copy.*

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